



February 15, 2002

**VIA ELECTRONIC FILING**

William F. Caton  
Acting Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 Twelfth Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Common Carrier Bureau Seeks Comment on Numbering Audit Program ; CC Docket  
Nos. 96-98, 99-200

Dear Mr. Caton:

Attached are comments of the Association for Local Telecommunications Services  
("ALTS") for filing in the above-captioned proceedings.

Sincerely,

/s/

Teresa K. Gaugler

**Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Implementation of the Local Competition	)	
Provisions of the Telecommunications Act of	)	CC Docket No. 96-98
1996	)	
	)	
	)	
Numbering Resource Optimization	)	CC Docket No. 99-200
	)	

**COMMENTS OF THE  
ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES**

The Association for Local Telecommunications Services (“ALTS”) hereby files its comments in the above-referenced proceedings in response to the Commission’s Public Notice regarding the Common Carrier Bureau’s Numbering Audit Program.<sup>1</sup> ALTS supports the Commission’s efforts to ensure that carriers comply with its numbering rules. The Numbering Audit Program requires both carriers subject to “for cause” audits and those subject to random audits to undergo an extensive auditing process. Extensive procedures may be appropriate when conducting an audit “for cause” when a carrier is suspected of violating Commission rules; however, ALTS believes that the Program is overly burdensome for carriers subject to random audits.

At a time when carrier resources are already stretched thin, it is unfair to subject a carrier that has not been suspected or accused of wrongdoing to such an extensive and burdensome process. Many carriers have limited resources to maintain and administer their internal

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<sup>1</sup> *Common Carrier Seeks Comment on Numbering Audit Program*, Public Notice DA 02-108, CC Docket Nos. 96-98 and 99-200 (released January 15, 2002).

numbering policies to comply with the Commission's rules and obtain numbering resources to satisfy their business requirements. To impose such a burdensome process on "innocent" carriers could put a severe strain on those carriers throughout the auditing process.

In the *NRO Second Report and Order*, the Commission delegated authority to the Chief of the Common Carrier Bureau "to develop a comprehensive audit plan including detailed analytical audit procedures for both 'for cause' audits and random audits."<sup>2</sup> This statement contemplates, or at least does not foreclose, the possibility of establishing separate auditing procedures for "for cause" audits and random audits. ALTS urges the Bureau to do just that – establish a separate and less burdensome process for random audits conducted on carriers not suspected of wrongdoing. There is no reason for such carriers to incur the high costs, in time and money, to comply with these audits where there is no suspicion that their practices violate or abuse Commission rules.

ALTS believes the Commission's purposes would be fully served through conducting random audits by first reviewing a carrier's own documentation of its internal procedures along with its publicly filed NRUF data. If no issues arise during this review, the auditor should not subject the carrier to further extensive auditing procedures. In keeping with the Commission's goals of providing flexibility in the auditing process and deterring misuse of numbering resources,<sup>3</sup> the procedures for random audits could also consist of a subset of those used for "for cause" audits. For example, rather than requiring a carrier to respond to all of the topics

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<sup>2</sup> Numbering Resources Optimization, *Second Report and Order*, *Order on Reconsideration* in CC Docket No. 96-98 and in CC Docket No. 99-200, and *Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* in CC Docket No. 99-200, 16 FCC Rcd 306, ¶ 95 (2000) (*NRO Second Report and Order*).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

included on the data request, the auditor could randomly select a smaller number of topics on which to gather data. This would provide a similar deterrent as would a full audit because carriers would not know in advance which of those topics would be selected; however, it would be less costly and burdensome for an individual carrier that is not accused of any wrongdoing to respond to the data request. In the *NRO Second Report and Order*, the Commission found that random audits would provide a similar deterrent as scheduled audits without subjecting the majority of carriers to the expense of scheduled audits.<sup>4</sup> The same rationale applies to limiting the extent of random audits: it would create a similar deterrent without subjecting the carrier to the higher expense of a full audit. At the very least, the auditor should accept the company's written explanation of its internal procedures and select only a subset of topics from the "for cause" auditing procedures in which the auditor would analyze samplings of numbers.

### **CONCLUSION**

For the foregoing reasons, ALTS urges the Common Carrier Bureau to reconsider its Numbering Audit Plan and modify it as it applies to random audits.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Association for Local  
Telecommunications Services**

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.* ¶ 88.